

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the final Office Action dated January 18, 2008. Claims 30, 31, 35 and 36 have been cancelled herein, without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter, and without conceding the correctness of the rejection. Claims 21 to 29, 32 to 34, 37 and 38 remain in the application, of which claims 21, 33, 37 and 38 are the independent claims. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

Initially, the Examiner's indication that claims 31, 32 and 36 recite allowable subject matter is acknowledged with appreciation.

Furthermore, the Applicant's undersigned representative thanks Examiner Kovacek for the thoughtful courtesies and kind treatment afforded during the telephonic interview conducted on January 29, 2008. In the interview, the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 101 was briefly discussed, with Examiner Kovacek proposing claim language that would, in his belief, render claim 38 fully statutory. Although the Applicant disagrees with the necessity of these changes, in an effort to secure early issuance and as an accommodation to the Examiner, claim 38 has been amended to incorporate the suggested claim features. No new matter is believed to have been added.

In the Office Action, claim 38 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as allegedly being directed to non-statutory subject matter. As claim 38 has been amended in accordance with the Examiner's suggestion, withdrawal of the § 101 rejection and an indication of allowance are respectfully requested.

Claims 21 to 30, 37 and 38 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0010715 (Chinn); and claims 33 to 35 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Chinn in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,246,981 ("Papineni"). As suggested by the Examiner, claims 21, 37 and 38 have been amended to recite the features of allowable claim 31 and intervening dependent claim 30, and claim 33 has been amended to recite the substance of allowable claim 36 as well as dependent claim 35. Withdrawal of the § 103 rejections, as moot, an indication of allowance, and early passage to issue are respectfully requested.

It is believed that all of the pending issues have been addressed. However, the absence of a reply to a specific rejection, objection, issue, or comment, including the Office Action's characterizations of the references, does not signify agreement with or concession of that

rejection, issue, or comment. In addition, because the arguments made above may not be exhaustive, there may be reasons for patentability of any or all pending claims (or other claims) that have not been expressed. Finally, nothing in this paper should be construed as an intent to concede any issue with regard to any claim, except as specifically stated in this paper, and the amendment or cancellation of any claim does not necessarily signify concession of unpatentability of the claim prior to its amendment or cancellation. Since the amendments made herein have been made solely in an effort to expedite advancement of this case, the Applicants reserves the right to prosecute the rejected claims in further prosecution of this or related applications.

No other matters being raised, it is believed that the entire application is fully in condition for allowance and such action is courteously solicited.

No fees are believed to be due at this time. Please apply any other charges or credits to deposit account 06-1050.

Respectfully submitted,

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